

Communication Interoperability Working Group
September 15, 2005
Minutes

WELCOME, PUBLIC COMMENT AND REVIEW OF MINUTES:

The meeting was called to order at 1410 by the Chair, Mike Varney. The following individuals were in attendance: Roy Piper (DEMHS), Stephan Brown (DOT/Bradley), George Carbonell (ConnDOT), Robert DiBella (Glastonbury EMD/DEMHS), John Gustafson (CMED-NH), Jeffrey Otto (QVEC), George Pohorilak (OSET), Gordon Shand (DPH), Mike Stemmler (CSP), Matt Valleau (CAP/CSP), Mike Varney (DOIT/CFCA), Keith Victor (West Hartford/CREPC), and Jerry Zarwanski (OSET). Additional guests from Darien Police Dept. (Chief Duane Lovello), Wilton Police Dept. (Chief Ed Kulhawik), and secretary (Lee Toffey) were present.

There were no public comments.

Minutes of the last meeting were accepted and will post on the website.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Governance Committee: Committee will report on progress to Mike Varney regarding the Fairfield County Tactical Interoperability Plan including Chief Lovello and Chief Kulkawik.
- B. Training & Exercise Workgroup: The draft of the training program on interoperability is ready and the initial presentation was made in June at the Fire Academy. Will work with Paul Benyeda at DEMHS to update and add STOCS frequencies and to coordinate with ITAC/ICALL and the distribution of the new batteries. The group will also work with DPS regarding inventory and training. The initial meeting will take place sometime at the end of this month. Mike Stemmler wants to complete as much of this as possible and has concerns regarding the radio inventory. Mike Varney has spoken to Rosemary Salerno of DPS regarding this matter.
- C. Technical Committee: George Carbonell reported that they are waiting for the RFI for the STOCS boxes and then the group will meet regarding the minimum specifications for portable radios to be bought with the grant funds. He spoke to Blair Sutherland (MA) regarding ITAC/ICALL channel 4 and its use as our primary and their secondary channel. They will come up with a plan to keep the channels separate along with input from the states of New York and Rhode Island. The committee will then take on the challenges of U-Call and V-Call the problems with using 800 MHz. Questions asked regarding radio orders through grant funds. Mike Varney replied that requested radios that are the same as those already on state contract will be ordered. All other radio orders will be held until a master agreement can be put in place to relieve the bid process. It should take six to eight weeks for this to be complete. Roy Piper advised that the Interoperability Request Forms are online and suggested that another page be added where Municipalities will list the frequencies they will be purchasing. John Gustafson suggested that the license information should also be included. Steve brown would like to see an inventory of all frequencies in the State and Bob DiBella suggested Call Signs also. Discussion progressed on procurement procedures and the upcoming radio contract, grant guidelines

and pre-authorization, as well as purchasing of used equipment and the STOCS RFI going to bid.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mike Varney asked about interoperable usage and incidents since the July 12th meeting.

- A. Portable Radio Inventory & Training Programs , and
- B. Test & Training Issues: George Carbonell received a comment about how poorly the ITAC/ICALL system is working. Bob DiBella referred to the DEMHS Advisor bulletin #2 in regards to an article from Manchester's Fire & Rescue and Emergency Management Director which stated that when lightening struck their tower and disabled their communications, they were able to get 25 radios and have the UCONN Mass Decontamination trailer deployed to give them communications capability for two weeks. Mike Stemmler and his staff were commended for their good work. Link to DEMHS Advisor is www.ct.gov/demhs , click on public information.
- C. Control Station Rules & Regulations: Letter sent out regarding rules & regulations. There are currently six Control Stations left to be installed. Memorandum from Chris Sievert, Motorola states: Greenwich FD (waiting on a new building), Meriden FD (waiting on Town Hall to install conduit and run antenna cable), Stratford PD (new person in charge left VM on 9-12-05 for new LT), Waterbury PD (change in person, left VM for new communications person on 9-12-05), OEM Area 1 (waiting on customer, city working with console vendor to determine if they can interface control station to present console. No word yet), OEM Area 2 (setting up appointment with shop for later this month). Complaint from Norwich American Ambulance that radio does not work. Mike Stemmler stated that it is co-located with a Nextel site so the radio has trouble receiving. Both radio and antenna have been replaced. Radio needs to be remoted or entire radio system physically moved. Committee agrees it is CMED's problem to solve.
- D. UASI: Still putting together program for 4.9 GHz. No one present to give report.
- E. Homeland Security Grant Program: There is a set aside to pay for the STOCS boxes, and another set aside for other equipment. Update on FY 2003 grant under new business.
- F. Tactical Interoperable Communication Plan: Mike Varney stated that a written plan is required. Southwest Region, with Norwalk as the host, has had several meeting with the local communities. At the next meeting the group will schedule a November conference to bring together key people to write the plan. ICTAP in San Diego has a software package for the input of frequencies, etc. but is having authorization issued with the Feds, but the plan is to use the software as an inventory/credentialing program. Has the ability to show state assets such as towers, radio caches, etc. it is hoped that the Local Municipalities can keep the program updated. Will be demonstrated as soon as it is available. The plan will be written by the end of the year with a full scale exercise in October 2006.
- G. RFI for STOCS equipment: Closes September 16, 2005.
- H. RFP for master catalog: Discussed previously in meeting
- I. Tactical Interoperable Plan Workshop: Mike Varney and Chuck Beck attended and shared with other states where we are. To their dismay CT is further along than most. Very focused on plan, it will be covered during the two day workshop.
- J. Other: Keith Victor is getting written approval from Feds to use Federal Low 400 MHz band from FEMA for USAR Team.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. 2nd ICTAP Request: request to expand to whole state. Per Mike Varney, initial email was affirmative, next email was negative, official reply was negative. Questioned secured funding and TIC plans. Leo and Doug to try and help.
- B. Personnel change: Chuck Beck has left DEMHS to take a position at DOT. He will still be a member of the committee. The new DEMHS representative is Roy Piper, who is the point person for all grant interoperability requests.
- C. Katrina Update: Mike Varney requested any updates and stated that several of Connecticut's physical assets were now in Louisiana. Roy Piper suggested that any assets, physical or people, should be closely tracked as Connecticut has been okayed for 100% reimbursement by the Federal government through the Public Assistance (PA) Program. Mike Varney added that Military assets include a Suburban filled with equipment that is currently the communications center for a high water unit in La.
- D. Fairfield County Police Chiefs Meeting: Commissioner Thomas and Deputy Commissioner Sandford from DEMHS along with Chairman Varney attended the meeting and answered questions.
- E. September 20 briefing at LOB: One topic will be Radio Interoperability. Mike Varney will report on activities to date and new projects.
- F. Other:
 - 1. Mike Stemmler reported that CSP telecommunications are to be expanded in Fairfield County with ITAC/ICALL to be placed in an existing facility and in Greenwich Hospital. Three additional repeater sites will be placed in Fairfield County as part of the DOT project funded by the Feds.
 - 2. Police Chiefs Meeting – questions were raised regarding interoperable communications with Public Works vehicles, both in Town and if they respond elsewhere. Discussion showed that STOCs should resolve the problem. It is one of the issues to be addressed in the Fairfield County Plan
 - 3. Announcement to be sent out regarding the Nextel Conference in NYC, and another in Springfield on October 26th.
 - 4. Email from Deputy Commissioner Sandford regarding Hurricane drill. Communication was tested with the local OEM area offices all losing phone communication as part of the drill. Discussion on how re-alignment of OEM Area's will affect equipment; how existing equipment will hold up in a hurricane; and satellite phones and phone list so everyone has the numbers. Mike Varney questioned if ITAC/ICALL stations should be put in the Area offices. Per Mike Stemmler, OEM purchased 20 radios to go to the five area offices and the towns around the Millstone area. It was decided that the need exists to have more people in Towns and Agencies who know what systems they have and the redundancies in place if a system goes down so communication is not interrupted.
 - 5. The Statewide Grant Committee met discuss expending remaining FY2003 grant Funds. The following projects were adopted: a – Funding for the Civil Air Patrol; b – new batteries for all ITAC/TCALL radios; c - \$400,000 allocated for CSP upgrades in existing ITAC/ICALL sites – Colebrook and Westbrook with a third planned if funds remain after purchases. DOT is handling some of the priority sites as part of their project so the next needed areas on the list were chosen. All radios licensed under CSP will be rebanded including the ITAC/ICALL; d – Mobile Command Units. Specs are almost finished for command unit. Will be sent without communication equipment so local vendors can be used. Will be forward to the Technical Committee as soon as we know they are being bought.

CORRESPONDENCE/GRANT REVIEWS:

- A. Interoperability Communications equipment requests processed are listed on Agenda
- B. Distribution of Authorized Equipment List (AEL) Section 6 – Interoperable Communications

NEXT MEETING: It was decided that for the rest of the year, meetings will take place on the 3rd Tuesday of every month. DOT in Rocky Hill will be booked through December but locations may be moved. To be determined at a later date.

Next meeting will be **October 18th at 1300 hours in the DOT location.**

Meetings open to the public.

Minutes will be posted to DEMHS website.

Meeting adjourned at 1550 hours.